

September 20, 2006

To: All Sprinkler, Locksmith, Security, and Fire Protection Contractors

From: Boyd Petty, Manager
Licensing Section

Re: New law enacted (R.S. 40:1664 et seq.) Affecting Locksmiths, Closed Circuit Television System Contractors, Electronic Locking Systems Contractors, Fire Protection and Sprinkler Contractors

This memo will serve to inform you of recent legislative changes to the fire sprinkler, fire protection, security, and locksmith licensing laws. I have outlined the major changes to the law, but I would strongly suggest you obtain a copy of the law. You may download the law by logging onto the Louisiana State Legislature's web page located at <http://www.legis.state.la.us/>. Scroll down the page to the bill search section. Under "Select a Session" choose 2006 Regular Session then under "View a Specific Instrument" choose Act 307. Click on view. The final version of the law will be under "Text-Current". **This law becomes effective January 1, 2007.**

Major Law Changes:

1. All three licensing laws combined into one. Act 307 combined all previous licensing laws into one body of law. Basically, firms and employees who previously applied for multiple licenses under the different laws now only have to apply for one license but will select multiple endorsements based on the work they wish to perform. Endorsements are divided into Life Safety and Property Protection. Life Safety endorsements include fire sprinkler, fire suppression, fire alarm, portable fire extinguishers and fire hoses. Property Protection endorsements include security systems, one & two family fire detection systems, electronic locking systems (access control, delayed egress and special locking systems), mechanical locking systems (locksmiths, bank locks, detention locks and door hardware), and closed circuit television systems.

2. Creation of a new multi-discipline advisory board. Act 307 creates a new advisory board which is mandated to determine all competency requirements for licensure. The board is also authorized to determine continuing education requirements for all license holders. The board will be made up of twelve members as follows:

(a) Eleven members shall be appointed by the governor from a list of nominees submitted to the governor by the fire marshal.

(b) The board shall consist of members representing all aspects of life safety and property protection. Each of the technical endorsements shall be represented by at least one board member licensed for such.

(c) One member shall be an employee of the office of the state fire marshal designated by the fire marshal. This individual will act as the chair of the committee.

3. Insurance requirements.

All firms must have a valid general liability (minimum of \$500,000 coverage) and workmen's compensation policy. Act 307 removed the requirement for security contractors to have errors and omission insurance coverage to obtain a license.

4. License fees. The fees for all licenses have now been placed in the law. Costs remain the same except that firms and employees choosing multiple fire protection endorsements must pay for the stated cost of the endorsement. Additionally, the cost for an Apprentice license has been standardized to \$50. An individual holding an apprentice license may work as an apprentice as long as the firm wishes and only needs one Apprentice license (no matter how many endorsements the firm has). Act 307 also allows the fire marshal to set up a system whereby all employee licenses expire at the same time as the firm's license. **This will reduce the administrative burden to firms to keep up with employee licenses expiring throughout the year.**

5. Late fees. Late fees have been reduced as follows:

Act 307 changes present law by providing a grace period for a license not renewed within 30 days of its expiration date. The late fee penalty shall be \$25 for a license not renewed before 31 to 45 days past the expiration date and \$50 for a license not renewed before 46 to 60 days past the expiration date. A license shall be suspended if not renewed within 60 days of its expiration date and the cost to reinstate a suspended license shall be the cost of the initial fees plus \$20.

6. Created two new exemptions to licensure.

Act 307 retains all current exemptions to licensure and added the following additional exemptions:

(a) Any manufacturer, and his employee or representative, who acts as a consultant to a licensed firm in the certifying, inspecting, installation, integrating, selling, and servicing of life safety and property protection systems regulated by this Subpart while under the direct supervision of the licensed firm. **This will allow the licensed firm to utilize a manufacturer's representative to advise it on installations or service without the manufacturer representative being required to be licensed.**

(b) A mechanical contractor licensed by the State Licensing Board for Contractors and holding a statewide mechanical work license classification issued by that board or, where applicable, a plumber licensed by the State Plumbing Board who only installs piping within a fixed fire suppression system.

This will allow a fixed fire suppression system contractor to subcontract to a licensed mechanical contractor or plumber for the piping installation only. The fire suppression contractor must install all detection devices, nozzles, pull stations, and suppression agent cylinders. The suppression contractor must also certify the system upon completion.

6. Background checks. Act 307 keeps current law requirements for criminal background checks. All applicants for property protection endorsements shall be undergo and pass a criminal background check. Owners and officers of firms must also pass the background check. Felony convictions are grounds for denial of licensure.

7. Required inspection of all life safety systems. Currently, only fire sprinkler systems require an annual inspection by law (other fire protection systems/equipment have this requirement by administrative rule only), Act 307 now requires all life safety systems/equipment to be inspected at a minimum, annually. Additionally, all electronic locking systems now require an annual inspection as well.

If you are interested in being considered for the new advisory board, please submit your name, resume and licenses currently held to my attention by November 15, 2006. Resumes should include all appropriate work experience, certifications and any membership in industry related organizations. All documents should be mailed to the office address at The Office of the State Fire Marshal, 8181 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at 1-800-256-5452.

cc: Felicia Cooper, SFM Administrator
Don Zeringue, Chief Architect
Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas Locksmith Association
Louisiana Fire Sprinkler Association
Louisiana Life Safety and Property Protection Association
Louisiana Automatic Fire Alarm Association